

# Information Technology (IT) in Oklahoma

Oklahoma boasts 70-plus data centers serving as IT lifelines for the likes of ADP, Google, and IBM. In Oklahoma City, 400 companies employ about 30,000 people in IT, high technology, and software development.<sup>1</sup>

## Fortune 500 Employers:

Company	Location	Statewide Employees
Apple	Oklahoma City, Tulsa	300-350
Booz Allen Hamilton Holding	Oklahoma City	25-50
Cisco Systems	Oklahoma City, Tulsa	50-100
Computer Sciences Corp.	Enid	50-100
Dell	Oklahoma City	1000-1500
Google	Pryor	100-200
Hewlett Packard	Tulsa	750-1000
IBM	Oklahoma City, Tulsa	300-400
Leidos Holdings (spin off of SAIC)	Oklahoma City, Midwest City, Fort Sill	100-200
Microsoft	Oklahoma City, Tulsa	100-150
NCR	Statewide	25-50
Oracle	Tulsa	25-50

Source: Oklahoma Department of Commerce. (August 22, 2017).

Information technology occupations play an important role in supporting the growth and innovation of many of Oklahoma's industries, including the Energy and Health Care Ecosystems. A recent report by the Brookings Institution recommended the formation of a Center for Energy and Health Collaboration to serve as a Launchpad for industry-research partnerships.<sup>2</sup> In order to make this recommendation a reality, the state must provide a stronger support system for information technology startups.

## About Dell, Inc.

Founded in Texas in 1984, Dell, Inc. is a multi-national computer technology company that develops, sells, repairs, and supports computers and related products and services. The Oklahoma City campus supports Customer Service and Technical Support operations for the company.

Dell opened operations in Oklahoma City in 2004, and by 2014, had brought an estimated \$340.5 million annual impact to the metro area economy and a cumulative \$2.2 billion economic impact to the state since opening its doors.<sup>3</sup> Dell employs over 1,000 Oklahomans who work around-the-clock supporting customers nationwide.

<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma Department of Commerce. (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Brookings Institution. (April 2017). Positioned for growth: Advancing the Oklahoma City Innovation District.

<sup>3</sup> Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. (2014).

# Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning, including apprenticeships and internships, offer Oklahomans the opportunity to earn a wage while learning valuable professional skills. Work-based learning also benefits employers by offering the opportunity to develop their ideal workforce and train for specific skills they need.

Oklahoma has been working to increase the number and diversity of work-based learning opportunities to include non-traditional industries, such as information technology, health care, and manufacturing.

## **Earn and Learn Oklahoma**

To expand work-based learning opportunities and increase education and training attainment among Oklahoma's workforce, the state established Earn and Learn Oklahoma through Executive Order in November 2017. Earn and Learn Oklahoma set a statewide goal to increase the number of registered apprenticeships and internships in the state to 20,000 by 2020.

## **Registered Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeships offer Oklahomans the opportunity to learn in-demand skills and obtain the professional credentials needed to enter and succeed in high-wage jobs in industries like Information Technology, Health Care, Financial Services, Aerospace, Construction, Biosciences and Advanced Manufacturing. They also allow employers to train workers in the exact skills and competencies their business needs.

In 2017, the Office of Workforce Development coordinated a pilot to launch Oklahoma's first IT apprenticeship, as well as its first youth apprenticeship. The program is a partnership between Dell, OSU-OKC, and AZTEC Charter School to recruit high school seniors and train them to work as help desk technicians. The students receive college credit toward a valuable degree while earning a good wage that incrementally increases as certifications are obtained.

## **Internship**

Internships offer another avenue to build a pipeline of future talent. Internships integrate classroom knowledge with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to develop and apply their professional skills, including critical employability skills like communication, problem solving, and time-management. Internships are also an opportunity for employers to guide and evaluate talent and benefit employers through added value to projects, filling temporary work needs, and the development of potential future employees.

Current proposed legislation<sup>4</sup> will establish the support of work-based learning opportunities as an official duty of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development. Additionally, the proposed legislation will establish a Registered Internship program. If this bill passes, Oklahoma will become the first state in the nation to establish a registered internship program. The registered internship program aims to create rigorous, quality, employer-driven work opportunities in our state.

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<sup>4</sup> HB 3303; SB 1171.